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ABSTRACT

This report is one of a series intended primarily for those engaged in or preparing for educational planning and administration (especially in developing countries) and for those government officials and civic leaders seeking a more general understanding of educational planning and its role in overall national development. In this booklet, the author examines the role of education in bringing unity to multiracial developing countries. He contends that some educational programs designed to correct economic and social imbalances between groups may, in fact, exacerbate race relations and undermine national unity. For these reasons, the author argues, planning education for a plural society involves more difficulties and responsibilities than does planning for a culturally homogenous society. (Author/JH)

Fundamentals of educational planning

16

Planning education for a plural society

Chai Hon-Chan

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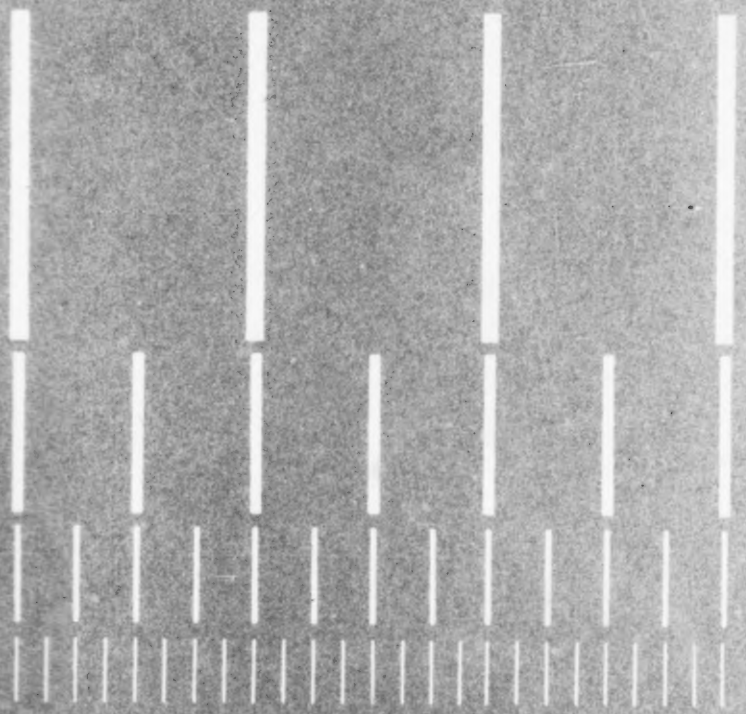

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Fundamentals of educational planning

The booklets in this series are written primarily for two groups: those engaged in—or preparing for—educational planning and administration, especially in developing countries; and others, less specialized, such as senior government officials and civic leaders, who seek a more general understanding of educational planning and of how it can be of help to over-all national development. They are devised to be of use either for private study or in formal training programmes.

The modern conception of educational planning has attracted specialists from many disciplines. Each of them tends to see planning rather differently. The purpose of some of the booklets is to help these people explain their particular points of view to one another and to the younger men and women who are being trained to replace them some day. But behind this diversity there is a new and growing unity. Specialists and administrators in developing countries are coming to accept certain basic principles and practices that owe something to the separate disciplines but are yet a unique contribution to knowledge by a body of pioneers who have had to attack together educational problems more urgent and difficult than any the world had ever known. So other booklets in the series represent this common experience, and provide in short compass some of the best available ideas and experience concerning selected aspects of educational planning.

Since readers will vary so widely in their backgrounds, the authors have been given the difficult task of introducing their subjects from the beginning, explaining technical terms that may be commonplace to some but a mystery to others, and yet adhering to scholarly standards and never writing down to their readers, who, except in some particular speciality, are in no sense unsophisticated. This

approach has the advantage that it makes the booklets intelligible to the general reader.

Although the series, under the general editorship of Dr. C. E. Beeby of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research in Wellington, has been planned on a definite pattern, no attempt has been made to avoid differences, or even contradictions, in the views expressed by the authors. It would be premature, in the Institute's view, to lay down a neat and tidy official doctrine in this new and rapidly evolving field of knowledge and practice. Thus, while the views are the responsibility of the authors, and may not always be shared by Unesco or the Institute, they are believed to warrant attention in the international market-place of ideas. In short, this seems the appropriate moment to make visible a cross-section of the opinions of authorities whose combined experience covers many disciplines and a high proportion of the countries of the world.

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Foreword

It was inevitable that a public activity as complex as educational planning should suffer from a succession of over-simplifications. Even when the educationists had it all to themselves, their compass swung widely over the years between the ideals of academic discipline and the development of the individual child. The entry of the economists a decade ago added a new dimension to educational planning, but even they split into two groups, with manpower and cost-benefit as their respective guiding stars. Every school of thought, to be sure, raised its hat politely to all the others, but then, to avoid complications, proceeded virtually to ignore them. Meanwhile the sociologists, from a safer distance, added their quota of caveats, and the systems analysts arrived late to proffer new techniques and foreshadow new complexities. There is little wonder that the academically simple administrator or politician became confused in his attempt to balance rival claims, but he was shrewd enough to guess that, during the 1970s, the political scientists might come as systemically into educational planning as did the economists in the 1960s, and that they could well upset any precarious balance that had been achieved.

In this booklet, Chai Hon-Chan proceeds to do just that for countries of one type. He shows that, in a plural society, purely political considerations may have to take precedence on occasion over the 'maximizing' (how easily once strange terms now slip off the educationist's pen!) of individual development, academic standards, manpower supply, and the economic returns for public expenditure. We have too easily assumed that education is one of the prime means of bringing unity to a plural society and that the more the people within that society get of it the better, but Chai demonstrates that it can, in fact, exacerbate racial tensions if it gives to the people of one

ethnic group economic or political advantages which the others regard as unfair. This puts a singularly heavy responsibility on the educational planner in a country of mixed races. At first sight it looks as if the old slogan of 'equal educational opportunity for all' should meet the case, but recent research has proved that different racial or social groups may show, for reasons unrelated to native intellectual endowment, widely differing capacities to take advantage of educational opportunities that are apparently equal. Technically as well as politically, the planning of education becomes more complex as one sees it more clearly.

Dr. Chai cannot claim to have made the planners' task any easier, but he has helped to preserve some of them from the over-simplification that has been the bane of much educational planning. By background and training he is well qualified to advise. He was born in Malaya, educated in an Anglo-Chinese school, and trained as a teacher in a Malayan training college in England. He graduated from the University of Adelaide and, after teaching in both secondary school and the University of Malaya, took his doctorate in educational planning and administration at Harvard University, doing his field work in Guyana on the subject of this booklet. While there he taught at the University and assisted the Ministry of Education with teacher training and with the preparation of a case for the World Bank. He is now Senior Lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Education in the University of Malaya. His best-known publication is a historical work, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896-1909*, but he has written widely on education and is at present working on a monograph, *Education and Modernisation in South-East Asia*, and a book on *Education and National Development in Plural Societies*.

Perhaps Chai's best claim to speak on this topic is that he has lived the greater part of his life in a plural society in south-east Asia, and spent an eventful year in another in the West Indies. Although ethnically he belongs to a strong minority, he obviously feels himself, before everything else, a Malaysian. Apart from the clue provided by his name, no one would guess from reading this booklet the ethnic origin of its author. He tells me that, as a boy during the wartime occupation of Malaya, he earned a hard living at times by carrying great baskets of eggs 400 miles from his upcountry home to food-scarce Singapore in unbelievably crowded trains. If one may judge from the skill and delicacy with which he handles politically fragile problems in this essay, I should be prepared to wager that he never broke an egg.

C.E. BEEBY
General editor of the series

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1. Introduction

In the last three decades empires have collapsed under the shock of a global war as well as the pressure of subject-peoples asserting their nationalist aspirations. In the wake of the disintegration of the old power structures have emerged the new nations of Asia, Africa, and the New World, involving fundamental shifts in group identities and loyalties, exchanging the old and familiar bonds of tribal or communal cohesion for new and strange symbols of nationhood. But the attainment of political independence did not *ipso facto* create a nation: the new nationalist leaders merely inherited the *framework* for a nation. Henceforth their task would be to strengthen the framework and to *build* a nation, drawing together the disparate tribal groups and ethnic minorities in the reconstruction of a *national* society.

The ideal model of the nation would seem to be one people, one language and one culture moulded together by a common historical experience and set traditionally in a well-defined territory. To this might be added race, religion and a common economic system. That few of the new nations fitted this model is no surprise, for they had been carved out at random by the accidents and imperatives of colonial expansion. Colonialism merely yoked together black, brown and yellow peoples speaking a babble of tongues and practising strange customs.

In the first flush of political independence, development programmes of varying degrees of sophistication were launched, for it was firmly believed that economic development would provide a concrete base for building a new nation. Since education was held to play a key role in this process, facilities for mass schooling were provided or expanded.

It was then a matter of time before all these efforts would bear fruit, that the nation in name would become one in fact.

But recent events in some of these new nations, notably Guyana, Nigeria and Malaysia, have focused attention on problems of ethnic or racial tensions and conflicts. Significantly each of these three countries is by no means the most backward: Nigeria's *per capita* gross national product is higher than that of India, Pakistan or China; Guyana's is higher than that of most African countries; and Malaysia's is among the top three in south-east Asia.

The civil war in Nigeria, and the racial clashes in Guyana and Malaysia, together with signs of centrifugal forces at work in other developing countries in Africa and south-east Asia, have raised questions of the political viability of plural societies. In each case the conflict was linked to social and political change brought about by a steady, albeit slow, development of the economy. It would seem to suggest that economic development generates tensions which may strain, if not fracture, the political framework of these nations. Since few of them possess the unity of language, culture and race, could they be expected to work effectively in political harness to survive the stresses and strains of domestic and regional crises?

At this point one may ask, 'What has this to do with educational planning? How does this concern the educational planner and administrator?'

The questions may be answered by considering some of the current expectations of education as an instrument of national development or nation-building in developing countries in general.

Formal, secular education in developing countries is recognized as the chief instrument of social change, economic development and political modernization through the development of human resources. Speeches of politicians and policy-makers frequently stress the importance of education in nation-building and in promoting national unity. The causal relationship between formal education and economic development is so firmly believed that the new nationalist leaders naturally look to education as the key to their political, economic and social problems.

Since economic backwardness is held to be the fundamental barrier to rapid social and political development, the overriding concern has hitherto been the achievement of a larger GNP and higher *per capita* incomes for the people. But economic development, like other social changes, occurs in nodes and in centres displaying high rates of change,

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so that while the GNP may grow larger it does not necessarily follow that the *per capita* income would rise evenly through all levels or sections of the population. In fact, economic growth is apt to produce inequities and imbalances between strata of society and geographical localities. The urban centres are generally the scene of rapid social changes, and new industries tend to be concentrated there. Industrialization, however limited, would therefore benefit mainly urban dwellers by offering them direct employment as well as indirect benefits through the multiplying effects of economic development, so that, in terms of personal income and services enjoyed, they reap most of the fruits of modernization. Coupled with this phenomenon is the fact that educational facilities are more developed in the urban centres than in the rural areas. The combination of better education and wider, more remunerative employment opportunities would give urban dwellers a great advantage over rural people.

Given the fact that in developing countries 60 to 90 per cent of the population is spread through the rural areas in subsistence or near-subsistence agriculture, the social tensions generated by economic development may be grave enough to have political repercussions. But where the rural-urban dichotomy happens to coincide with the racial or ethnic split, the economic imbalances are apt to be seen as *racial* inequities. In this way the usual social tensions may be charged with racial antagonisms to the point where they become politically explosive.

When these tensions are worked into the struggle for political power, the fuse is set for racial strife. Where economic development has the effect of widening economic imbalances between ethnic groups, it would appear to be malfunctional from the viewpoint of promoting national cohesiveness. The problem, of course, lies not with economic development as such but with policies and strategies. At any rate, in such a setting the political realities of racial imbalances may compel the adoption of economic policies which may correct current imbalances, or at least mollify grievances, but they might not maximise the potential for rapid economic growth and therefore might actually slow down the development of the country as a whole. Given the strong links between education and economic development, there might be the temptation to use educational planning as a political instrument for the balance of ethnic-economic power.

At this point we may pause for a moment to consider the idea of imbalance in social and economic problems. Imbalance implies the

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existence of a norm and the departure from it, and conversely balance suggests the adherence to such a norm or standard. Thus, economic imbalance in a multi-racial society suggests that the economic development of racial groups has been lopsided in favour of one group, whether by design or by accident. Among economists there has been an ongoing debate on the advantages and disadvantages of balanced and unbalanced economic growth, but this is in connection with strategies of economic development. To the best of the present writer's knowledge, there has been no serious suggestion that there is any advantage in an unbalanced economic development of racial groups in a plural society. In this context economic imbalance in race relations suggests a socially negative condition which should be rectified by some kind of economic balance. Clearly, any attempt to fix an absolute standard of balance would create more conceptual problems than it set out to solve. For the present purpose, the only meaningful interpretation that can be given to imbalance is that it connotes an unduly high or unduly low share of economic benefits, independent of the question of individual or group effort and productivity.

There is little dispute that the basic problems of multi-racial societies are economic rather than racial; but what are fundamentally class conflicts tend to be overlaid and reinforced by racial differences. Notwithstanding the fact that scientists have demolished the most intractable myths about race, ordinary and often quite intelligent people continue to regulate their attitudes and social behaviour by these myths. Racial differences in themselves are of no great significance in normal social relations, but when they are set in the context of economic and political competition for power, they take on enormous importance.

Under such conditions of rapid change, tensions build up between groups, and frustrations tend to generate aggression which must find an outlet. The target for aggression is usually a rival or a scapegoat. Recent instances of ethnic scapegoating in various plural societies are illustrations of how civil disturbances rooted in straightforward economic frustrations may provoke frenzied racial clashes out of all proportion to the actual stimulus.

In so far as abrasive race relations stem from economic conditions, which in turn have their roots in the educational process, they are basically educational problems. Racial myths and prejudices, the driving forces of race-hate and aggression, are learned and internalized by individuals and groups. For this reason the educational

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process is capable of modifying, if not eradicating, these myths and prejudices.

For the educational planner and administrator, therefore, education in a plural society poses a very special challenge. As the primary moving force in social and economic change, education could be a powerful means of welding together the disparate elements of a multi-racial society, or it could be an insidious process, by effect if not by intention, of hardening lines of division and aggravating existing tensions. Given the advantages that urban centres enjoy, economic development will certainly raise the *per capita* income of urban dwellers as a whole much more than that of rural folk. As different countries are unequal in their development, so within nations different ethnic groups may be unequal in their opportunities or their capacities for change and development because of the interplay of social, economic and cultural variables. The provision of universal education as a democratic ideal and as an economic investment may result, in fact, in unbalanced development between ethnic groups because of their differential capacities for absorbing and utilizing education.

The caution here is that educational planning designed mainly to meet manpower requirements in plural societies is not always a straightforward problem of quantitative inputs and outputs. Where social and economic inequalities bedevil ethnic tensions, the educational process, if left to take its own natural course, could, and often does, reinforce prejudice, fear, intolerance, jealousy and even hatred. These negative forces have their roots in the way different ethnic groups perceive one another not as fellow citizens or as members of the same society sharing the same national destiny, but as rivals or interlopers competing unfairly or unscrupulously for scarce rewards. Cultural differences are looked upon with suspicion; differential economic abilities are held in fear or contempt; and social aspirations arouse pathological anxieties about group survival. At best, the educational process does little to neutralize the socially destructive forces that lie deep in the hearts and minds of men and women who somehow, through their home and communal environment, infect their children with their own racial fears and prejudices as surely as they transmit to them their social and cultural values.

For these and other reasons, the educational planner and administrator in a plural society must sharpen a wider range of sensitivities than the usual array of administrative skills and planning techniques if he is to deal with the highly complex problems of human resource

development. To be sure, the ultimate policy decisions are made by politicians, but in the course of his normal duties the planner may be called upon to advise the decision-makers on professional and policy matters. The educational planner who fails to consider carefully the underlying social and political tensions, when preparing programmes for educational expansion or for qualitative improvements in the system, may inadvertently exacerbate race relations. Since one of the skills of a planner is the ability to forecast probable outcomes based on current assumptions, he should be able to anticipate the linked sequences of policy decisions and action programmes and, therefore, prepare to meet them with appropriate solutions.

In the following sections, an attempt will be made to elaborate on some of the main points raised in this introduction but, of necessity, only in outline. For more detailed studies of specific problems, the reader may refer to *Suggestions for further reading* at the end of the booklet.

2. Some characteristics of plural societies

The concept of a plural society is generally attributed to J.S. Furnivall in his writings based on observations of colonial societies in Burma and Java under British and Dutch rule respectively. They enjoyed a relatively stable political order, but this masked the growing group antipathies which lay dormant and were held in check partly by the overarching control of the colonial power, and partly by the social and economic segmentation of the various racial groups. The structure of colonial society gave rise to a situation described as follows:

> In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of people—European, Chinese, Indian, and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds to its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere, there is a division along racial lines.

Furnivall maintained that in the colonial societies of south-east Asia (and, by implication, similar societies in Africa and in the Caribbean region) the mixing of racial and cultural groups was not a voluntary process but imposed by the colonial power and by force of economic circumstances. He believed that nationalism within a plural society was itself a disruptive force, tending to shatter and not to consolidate its social order because it lacked a common social will.

1. J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1948, p. 304.

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The concept of pluralism has since been elaborated on by several social scientists, particularly M. G. Smith, but we need not be detained by the finer points of a fascinating debate on the subject. For our purpose here it will suffice to distinguish between social and cultural pluralism, although in practice the one phenomenon implies the other. Cultural pluralism usually develops from the presence in a given society of several ethnic or racial groups with different cultural traditions. Social pluralism is found where the society is structurally divided into analogous and duplicatory but culturally similar groups of institutions, and the corporate groups are differentiated on a basis other than culture. Additionally the plural society has some or all of the following characteristics: relative absence of value consensus; relative presence of conflict between major corporate groups; relative autonomy between parts of the social system; relative importance of coercion and economic interdependence as bases for social integration; relative political domination by one of the corporate groups over the others; and primary importance of segmental, utilitarian, non-affective and functionally specific relationships *between* corporate groups, and total, non-utilitarian, affective and diffuse ties *within* such groups.

Clearly, cultural and social pluralism is a matter of degree with as many variations as there are plural societies. If we take the existence of a common language as a measure, we might place Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, Burma, Mauritius, Ceylon and most of the new African states at one end of the scale, and the West Indian societies, as found in Trinidad, Jamaica and Guyana, at the other end.

Critics of M. G. Smith's model of the plural society and its variations point out that there must be a minimum core of shared values, a common social will, if the society is to be maintained. A society or social system cannot be defined in cultural terms merely by observing the presence or absence of cultural traits: it must be defined in terms of social action. Raymond Smith, for example, criticizes the stress on differences in the plural society as misleading because it concentrates upon racial and cultural antagonisms and upon group conflict, while simultaneously directing attention away from the integrative processes which make for social unity.

To be sure, there is a wider circle of shared values between racial groups in the West Indies than there is in the plural societies of south-east Asia or Africa, but in a conflict situation shared values do not calm emotions or conciliate contending factions: it is the racial factor which becomes crucial in mass hysteria. The outsider may indeed see

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that Guyanese or Trinidadians do have much in common, but the operative fact is that their perception of differences in the use of means and the attainment of ends in social, economic and political life exacerbates race relations. Social or political facts are not self-evident in the sense that by themselves they proclaim the truth. What colours men's thinking and conditions their actions is their perception of truth based on their comprehension and interpretation of the facts; and the perception of social reality is refracted through the prisms of their own social conditioning, their prejudices and their fears. The cumulative result of perceived differences, of frustrations arising from real or imagined instances of prejudices and discrimination, build up pressures which, when exploited by demagogues, impel the masses towards racial violence.

Let us consider the historical processes which have shaped some of the plural societies. Varying patterns of colonial economy set the framework for the occupational differentiation and economic specialization of various ethnic groups. In the former British West Indies the freed slaves, abhorring the working conditions of the sugar plantations, established independent communities based mainly on subsistence farming. The work of Christian missionaries soon gave them the initial advantage of modern education, which equipped the more enterprising and ambitious Negroes with the skills to become school teachers and government clerks. From there it was a short jump to the professions and the upper echelons of the expanding civil service and managerial positions in private enterprise. But for a long time their social mobility was restricted by colour prejudice and discrimination.

In Guyana the emancipation of slaves created a labour shortage, and small numbers of Portuguese (from the Madeira Islands) and the Chinese were brought in. After serving their indenture, they moved quickly into shopkeeping, and thence to the professions. As the East Indians were the last group to arrive, their labour was essential to the prosperity of the sugar industry, and the policy, therefore, was to keep them on the plantations or at least closely dependent on the sugar industry for their livelihood. Unlike the early African slaves, who were systematically de-tribalised, the East Indians were allowed, if not encouraged, to maintain their language, religion, cultural traditions, and family and kinship patterns, but for a long time they remained practically illiterate, socially backward, and economically very poor.

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In East Africa the Indians were first brought in to build the Nairobi railroad at the end of the nineteenth century. When their period of indenture was finished, most of them returned to their native Punjab, but the shopkeepers stayed on and formed the new capitalist class as well as the petty civil servants and clerks.

In Malaya, the Chinese first arrived in large numbers as indentured labourers for the tin mines, and they were followed by traders and petty shopkeepers. Eventually the mining townships which they carved out of the jungle became thriving urban centres. The vast majority of Indians were also indentured labourers, brought in to build the railways running north-south of the Malay Peninsula and to work on the rubber plantations, which were then opening up at the end of the nineteenth century. Other Indians from Madras or Ceylon came as government clerks, Punjabis came as policemen and Gujeratis as cloth merchants and haberdashers.

During this period of mass immigration, colonial policy was not in favour of compelling or persuading the indigenous peoples to work under slavery-like conditions on the plantations. Thus the Malays in Malaya and the Fijians in Fiji, for example, were left severely alone in their traditional occupation of subsistence farming. Special laws and political agreements between the British and the indigenous rulers served to protect traditional Malay or Fijian agricultural land. Consequently the majority of Malays and Fijians were left undisturbed by the social and economic changes taking place outside their traditional way of life.

The experience of the countries mentioned above suggests that some of the most important variables, which shape the particular structure of a plural society, are the method of immigration, the milieu in which it took place, the relative size of the immigrant population, the economic activities or occupations the immigrants and indigenous peoples eventually settled into or continued in, the nature of colonial and post-colonial educational policies, and the pattern of educational development.

Alterations in the basic pluralistic structure, of course, take place over time, depending on the nature and the rate of economic and political change. The structural alterations would presuppose social and cultural changes within each component section of the plural society to the extent of evolving a new syncretistic culture that served to link the two or more sections. Over a very long period of time, it is conceivable that each of the component cultures would disappear

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completely, their places being taken over by the syncretistic culture. But over a short period, as in the history of contemporary plural societies, the larger part of each component culture will be persistent enough to leave the basic pluralistic structure intact.

During the last two decades, economic, political and educational development has brought about important social changes in plural societies, chiefly by quickening the pace of, and widening the opportunities for, social and geographical mobility. But the underlying pluralistic structure has not changed significantly. Social scientists believe that the modernisation process will eventually establish interest groups based on achievemental and universalistic norms, and that primordial groups based on ascriptive and particularistic criteria will fade away. To some extent this has taken place, but at the same time empirical evidence suggests that industrialization, far from breaking up the old structures of plural societies, has to adapt itself to new patterns of race relations not only between Caucasians and Africans, but also between Africans and Asians and between Asians of different colours and cultures.

Similarly, it is held that the process of modern education, which cultivates a scientific and rational outlook, and political modernisation, which promotes mass participation at the polls, will so weaken the affective ties of tribal or ethnic groups that they will be re-grouped along class and ideological lines. But again the recent experience of many plural societies shows a disappointing record. Political parties in Trinidad, Guyana, Mauritius, Ceylon, Malaysia and Fiji, for example, tend to be supported largely by specific ethnic groups which are apt to be swayed by racial sentiments rather than by the ideological appeal of the party leaders. This is not to deny that the majority of political leaders do try to build up their mass following on ideological foundations, and indeed maintain a multi-racial front, but the fact remains that the masses continue to be moved mainly by racial issues.

If in the preceding pages undue emphasis has been placed on the negative characteristics of plural societies, it is not because of a morbid interest in tension and conflict. If the fact of race has been stressed, it is not because one subscribes to racist doctrines or believes in racial solutions to what are essentially class and economic problems, but rather because race is, and may continue for a long time to be, a social and political variable in inter-group relations. The poignant fact is that many of the black, brown and yellow races, who used to complain so bitterly of discrimination, insults and injury they allegedly

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suffered at the hands of the whites, are now not entirely blameless in their attitudes towards, and their treatment of, other coloured races. In so far as plural societies are wracked by racial tensions, they are suffering from a morbid condition, but avoiding the subject will not remove the ailment. Soon after the race riots in Malaysia in 1969, the political leaders admitted that too many problems touching the country's race relations in the past had been swept under the carpet in the hope that they would disappear. The current attitude is to confront them honestly and frankly, so that solutions may be found.

The realities of race relations demand a candid and rational analysis of the interlocking causes of social tensions and conflict. Without viable solutions, the plural societies currently suffering from racial cleavages may not be able to survive the tensions arising from the transition from traditionality to modernity. In this context, the relevance of education is beyond dispute, but its instrumental effectiveness in providing bases for social integration and cultural synthesis depends upon what policies are followed, and how the educational process is shaped and geared to achieve national unity. A part of the responsibility, at least, lies with the educational planner and administrator.

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3. The impact of education and economic development on race relations

Modern, secular education is essentially a western development, and Christian missionaries were, in most cases, the pioneers of education in the colonial territories. To be sure, their primary purpose was to convert the natives to the Christian faith, but this should not detract from the fact that they built schools and provided thousands of children with basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy at a time when practically no one else was interested in the education of 'backward' peoples. In the process, they laid the foundations for the modern educational systems in the developing countries.

A universal characteristic of educational development in plural societies is that it was effected initially through the 'official' language of the metropolitan power, rather than through the language of the indigenous people. Whatever criticisms may be made against the imposition of a foreign language, it cannot be denied that the use of the metropolitan language hastened the initial development of education because it made it possible to use textbooks and other educational materials which were readily available from the metropolitan country. This was especially important in countries where the multiplicity of tribal dialects, spoken by relatively small groups of people, made it uneconomic to develop and use any one of them for educational purposes. Notable exceptions were Malaysia and Indonesia, where primary schooling for the indigenous peoples was instituted with Malay, Javanese, Batak and some of the other major dialects used in various parts of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago.

Whatever judgements historians may make on the educational policies of the colonial powers, colonial education did provide the catalyst to the social, economic and political changes which led ultimately to the emergence of scores of new nations in Asia, Africa

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and the New World, but in some cases it also helped to shape the structure of plural societies as we know them today.

In the former British West Indies, the Negroes were among the first to be introduced to modern education, and they were therefore the first to achieve some social mobility even within the highly restricted colonial society. Among the East Indians, there was initially some suspicion of the mission schools, but when they found that they could attend school without necessarily being converted from their traditional Hinduism or Islam, they became more receptive to education, especially when it brought tangible rewards in better employment. But for a long time their prejudice against female education kept their women socially depressed.

In the Malay States, the British had an agreement with the Malay rulers that Malay custom and religion (Islam) would not be interfered with, whatever else the British administrator was empowered to do. Historically, this had far-reaching consequences, for Christian missionaries were debarred from proselytising among the Malays, and therefore establishing schools for them. Instead, the missionaries diverted their energies and their resources to spreading education among the Chinese and, to a lesser extent, the Indians. Since the Chinese were found mainly in the fast-growing townships, some of the earliest English-medium schools were established there. The Chinese, like the East Indians in the West Indies, were initially suspicious of the mission schools, but they soon overcame their prejudices when they saw the economic advantages of an English education. Employment opportunities were opening up in government departments and commercial enterprises for people who were literate in English. The story is very similar in Africa and India.

The British regarded the Malays as their special protégés, for whom a separate system of elementary education in their own language was established. But the policy was to disturb the Malays' traditional way of life as little as possible. Since they were rural people engaged in subsistence agriculture, their elementary schooling should fit them mainly for their traditional economic activities. This policy was, no doubt, inspired by the best of intentions, but the effect was to keep the vast majority of Malays in a socially and economically depressed condition. Those who were recruited and trained as school teachers for Malay schools achieved some social mobility within their own society, but even this was extremely limited since their basic education seldom exceeded the sixth grade.

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Eventually four parallel school systems evolved in Malaya to cater to the differing needs of ethnic groups and of the government. In addition to the Malay schools, Tamil elementary schools were established mainly on the rubber plantations for the children of Tamil labourers concentrated there. The Chinese community established their own schools, and the missionaries and the government opened English-medium schools. Both the Chinese- and English-medium schools were concentrated in the urban centres. In most cases up to 70 per cent of the enrolments in the English-medium schools was made up of Chinese pupils, the balance being made up of Indians and a sprinkling of Malays. The number of Malay pupils in English-medium schools later increased through a system of transferring the most promising ones from the Malay-medium schools to the government English-medium schools.

By and large the Chinese had the major advantage over the Malays in educational opportunities and achievement, with the Indians occupying a middle position. Thus, through education the more agressive Chinese and Indians were able to achieve rapid social mobility. The pattern is similar for the Negroes in the West Indies, and for the Indians in Fiji as well as in East Africa and Mauritius.

Since the urban centres displayed the highest rates of change, those immigrant groups who began as petty traders and shopkeepers were able to expand their activities and diversify their economic enterprise. In the West Indies, entrepreneurs tend to come from Indians, Chinese, Portuguese and other local whites, rather than from the Negroes. In Fiji it is the Indians who also comprise the bulk of businessmen in East Africa. In Malaysia the Chinese dominate trade and commerce, banking and industry, if foreign nationals are excluded. Thus, in a position of economic strength, some ethnic groups have been able to consolidate and reinforce their economic dominance during the last two decades when economic development was accelerated under various five-year development programmes initiated by the governments. Those who had better education and the necessary skills were therefore able to grasp the slowly expanding employment opportunities.

It is during this period of rapid social and economic change that tensions are likely to rise and make their impact on race relations. In countries where the vast majority are poor, the symbols of wealth and power are highly visible—sleek automobiles, expensive clothes, and luxury homes in exclusive residential areas. In the new economic

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climate, small shopkeepers and petty traders may emerge as the leading industrial entrepreneurs, and the bright, ambitious sons of clerks, minor civil servants, and school teachers find themselves as the new elites from the national universities. By and large, the post-independence breed of professional men in the plural societies of south-east Asia—lawyers, engineers, doctors, research scientists, managers, university professors—tend to be people of immigrant stock. Although the wealthy and powerful are essentially in the minority, their ethnic identity suddenly achieves a new prominence. From the observation that the new elites are predominantly people of a certain colour or racial stock, it is one small step to the generalisation that all people of that group are rich and powerful. That is to say, there is a tendency to distinguish between the rich and the poor in simplistic racial terms. Thus, what is essentially a class division is apt to be interpreted as racial imbalance in social and economic development. But to view the problem of wealth and poverty in racial terms is to distort the economic condition of the society as a whole, and to mistake the myth for the reality. The danger lies in allowing national policies for social and political reconstruction to be unduly influenced by specious arguments and facile generalisations about race and economic power.

At any rate, in a society strained by economic and social conflict, it is often not the objective measure of wealth, but the subjective sense of poverty, deprivation and disadvantage that provides the rationale for a course of action which may lead ultimately to the confrontation between two ethnic groups *as groups*. Of course, the question of economic strength is closely linked to the problem of political power. In a plural society, the political structure is likely to be unstable if both economic strength and political power are vested in one group, unless it also forms the numerical majority, or unless it employs extreme coercive measures to protect its vested interests. Even then, it is a matter of time before the status quo is changed either by democratic process or by violence. In an open, competitive society, however, all social classes will include people of all ethnic origins in varying proportions. Even where ethnic groups tend to polarize around certain political parties, there is usually some kind of balance of power between competing groups within the nation.

Where one ethnic community, taken as a whole, appears to lag behind another in economic development, class rationalisations are unlikely to reduce antagonisms between them. The antagonisms tend

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to sharpen in the urban centres where competition for jobs may be keen. If employment is dictated solely by achievement norms, those from the urban centres, with their distinct educational advantages, will have the edge over those from the rural areas. In such circumstances, it may be necessary to follow a policy of positive discrimination in favour of the group considered to be at a disadvantage until such time as a balance has been achieved. However, this immediately poses the question of what should constitute an equitable balance, and how and to what extent this principle should be applied. It appears that social justice to disadvantaged groups may take the form of proportional representation in employment in the public sector.

Clearly, a quota system to maintain a racial balance in employment is only a temporary measure. The long-term solution lies in some kind of proportional representation of ethnic groups in manpower training programmes and in providing equal educational opportunities. This is where the perceptive educational planner could minimize tensions by ensuring that the flow of students through the educational system is of the appropriate mix, not merely in the arts or sciences, but also in terms of ethnic representation. The problems are particularly acute where one ethnic group has the initial advantage of easy access to better schools. The lack of careful planning may result in further imbalances which become particularly glaring in secondary and tertiary education. The experience of West Malaysia (Malaya) may serve as an illustration.

TABLE 1. Distribution of students by courses and ethnic groups in the University of Malaya, 1967/68

Faculty	Chinese	Malays	Indians*	Others+	Total
Agriculture	128	60	11	3	202
Arts	800	966	319	47	2132
Engineering	293	11	22	1	327
Science	721	84	68	5	878
Medicine	273	70	44	2	389
Education	127	51	35	2	215
Economics and administration	217	159	37	4	417
Total	2559	1401	536	64	4560
Percentage	56.1%	30.7%	11.8%	1.4%	100.0%

* Includes Ceylonese and Pakistanis.
\+ Mainly Eurasians.
SOURCE University of Malaya, *Nineteenth annual report, 1967-68*, p. 186.

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With references to the figures in Table 1, the reader's attention is drawn to the fact that, of the total population of 8.541 million in 1965 in West Malaysia, Malays accounted for 50 per cent, Chinese 37 per cent, Indians 11 per cent, and Others 2 per cent. Thus from the viewpoint of the population distribution, Malays were under-represented, and Chinese and Others were over-represented in the student enrolment in the University of Malaya. The relatively small numbers of Malays in agriculture, engineering, science and medicine are in marked contrast to those in the arts.

The enrolment pattern in the University of Malaya is, of course, a natural consequence of the enrolment pattern in the sixth-form classes (grade 12 and 13) which prepare students for university entrance. Table 2 shows the sixth-form enrolments in Malay-medium and English-medium schools in West Malaysia in 1968. Although the figures do not show actual ethnic numbers, certain broad conclusions may be drawn from the fact that the majority of students in the English-medium schools is made up of Chinese and Indians. The wide disparity in numbers between Malay-medium and English-medium science classes leaves little doubt that the relative scarcity of Malays in agriculture, engineering, science and medicine was directly

TABLE 2. Sixth-form enrolments in Malay-medium and English-medium schools, West Malaysia, 1968

	Form six lower				Form six upper				Total	
	Arts		Science		Arts		Science		Arts	Science
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Malay-medium	257	199	190	4	323	170	98	3	949	295
English-medium	487	533	943	239	739	740	1362	312	2499	2856
Total	744	732	1133	243	1062	910	1460	315	3448	3151
Malay-medium percentage	34.5	27.2	16.8	1.6	30.4	18.7	6.7	0.9	27.5	9.4
English-medium percentage	65.5	72.8	83.2	98.4	69.6	81.3	93.3	99.1	72.5	90.6
Total percentage	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

SOURCE Ministry of education, educational planning and research division, *Educational Statistics of Malaysia, 1968*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1970.

due to the low output of Malay students with science and mathematics from the upper secondary schools. This, in turn, stemmed from the fact that there has been a very low output of Malay science and mathematics graduate teachers; or, what is more relevant, science and mathematics teachers capable of teaching these subjects in *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malay).

TABLE 3. Output of science and mathematics teachers with diploma of education, faculty of education, University of Malaya

Year	Malays		Non-Malays	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1963/64	—	—	7	100.0
1964/65	2	8.7	21	91.3
1965/66	1	3.4	28	96.6
1966/67	3	6.4	44	93.6
1967/68	—	—	34	100.0
1968/69	4	7.1	52	92.9
1969/70	4	5.7	66	94.3
Total	14	5.3	252	94.7

SOURCE Faculty of education, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

As shown in Table 3, nearly 95 per cent of the total output of science and mathematics teachers between 1964 and 1970 were non-Malays. Although it is not known where the teachers were posted, it may be assumed that the majority were absorbed into the English-medium schools.

The pattern of enrolment in the University of Malaya has been the long-term result of segmenting the educational system into four major educational streams, using Malay, Chinese, English and Tamil as the media of instruction in the primary schools; English and Chinese in secondary schools, and mainly English in the university. This has meant that those who attended English-medium schools had the chance of a straight run from primary to university education. Chinese-medium secondary students, who had a sufficient command of English and had the necessary entrance qualifications, could also enter the University of Malaya, or other institutions overseas. Those with only Chinese had their choices of university education limited to Nanyang University in Singapore, or overseas institutions. Those

educated in Tamil had no prospects of secondary schooling, unless they were able to acquire enough English to enter the English-medium secondary schools. Recognising this, the majority of Indians sent their children to English-medium primary schools.

In the past, therefore, the vast majority of students from Malay-medium schools had their education terminated at the 6th grade if they did not drop out before then. The brighter pupils were transferred to English-medium secondary schools where, after an intensive course in English, they entered the main English-medium stream leading up to the 11th grade, from which they might graduate with the School Certificate.

The establishment of several Malay-medium secondary schools during the last fifteen years has widened educational opportunities for Malays, but they were faced with difficulties arising from the shortage of trained graduate teachers in science and mathematics. Students who graduated from the sixth form faced further difficulties and frustrations when they entered the University of Malaya to find that teaching was done mainly in English.

The current policy in Malaysia is to effect a gradual changeover to Malay as the main medium of instruction at all levels of education. In 1970 the English-medium schools started their first-grade classes in Malay. For the present, the Chinese- and Tamil-media schools continue to function as they are, although the national language is a compulsory subject for all, but it is a matter of time before they may be obliged to use Malay as a medium of instruction. Meanwhile the University of Malaya and the University of Penang have increased the number of courses to be taught in Malay, and the National University was established in 1970 to cater to the needs of Malay-medium secondary-school graduates with courses given entirely in Malay.

The question of the national language and the language for education has presented no problems in the West Indies and most of the African nations, although in the case of the latter it is by no means certain that Swahili may not be adopted as a national language. Mauritius and Fiji have opted for English as the main if not the sole medium of instruction. In Ceylon it was a hot political issue between Sinhalese and Tamils and sparked off one of the worst communal riots. The problem was resolved by according parity of treatment for both Sinhalese and Tamil. Singapore settled the language problem by giving equal status to Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English, with

Malay as the *national* language in view of the Republic's geographical location, and English as the *de facto* language of public administration. In Malaysia, English continued as one of the two official languages for a period of ten years after independence in 1957, but from 1967 Malay became the sole official language. For the last two decades the language of education has been a thorny problem. For many years the Chinese schools, and to a lesser extent the Tamil schools, fought a rearguard battle to maintain their right to continue using Chinese or Tamil as the main medium of instruction. Official policy, however, is firmly in favour of Malay as the main medium of instruction for all national schools, though English will continue to occupy its rightful place as a second language. Apart from this ruling, there is no restriction on the teaching of Chinese or Tamil or any other language as a subject.

From this brief review of the past, it may be observed that modern education has been the major catalyst in generating the forces of change in plural societies, but its impact on social and economic development has been haphazard, resulting in imbalances in ethnic participation in the modern sectors of the economy. These imbalances may be attributed to the fact that socio-economic and cultural factors shape the differential capacities of ethnic groups to grasp and use the new educational opportunities, however limited, to promote their development. Certain immigrant groups, like the Chinese and the Indians, tend to take to education like ducks to the water. Those with a materialistic, future-oriented outlook regard education as an investment and, therefore, are prepared to forego current consumption for future satisfaction.

These are some of the important factors which have predisposed some ethnic groups to making the most of the new economic opportunities. The differential rates of social change have therefore widened the economic disparities between ethnic groups.

By raising the expectations and quickening the social mobility of millions of people, education and economic development have had the effect of not only breaking down the traditional social and cultural barriers which have kept racial groups apart, but also throwing them together in a common labour market where competition for scarce jobs tends to arouse and sharpen racial rivalries. It is during this transition period, when increasing numbers of people are moving from the traditional to the modern sector of the economy, that the danger of racial clashes becomes very real in the framework of

democratic politics. The recent race riots and clashes in several plural societies lend support to this observation. The national governments of these countries are fully aware of these dangers and are therefore casting around for viable solutions.

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4. Education and national unity

The belief in education as a cementing force for national unity springs largely from the empirical evidence of the older, established nations. No doubt modern education has played an important role in the shaping of a national identity, but its importance must be related to the part played by other factors: a long, common historical experience, the complex processes of modernization, and perhaps the cathartic effects of civil and international wars. In the history of established nations, it is by no means clear what the causal relationships are between education and national unity. Certainly in the economic development of the rich nations educational development did not precede industrialization. It was usually the other way round, although once industrialization had begun it provided the means for developing education, and the two processes would move together in an upward spiral.

At any rate it is widely held that there is no logical necessity for the developing countries to follow the historical pattern of development of the rich nations. Just as the poor countries are using education to generate economic growth, so are they attempting to create national unity by means of education.

But the basic question is: what is national unity in the context of plural societies? That the question defies a definitive answer should not minimize its importance or urgency, for unless the national leaders, policy-makers and people whose business is to educate the young have some idea of what they are talking about, it would be mere rhetoric to stress the importance of education in bringing about national unity.

The basic difficulties arise from the ambiguity of the term national unity, which means different things to different people. Some of the

usual qualities identified with national unity are 'a common outlook', 'a feeling of togetherness', and so on, but they do not indicate how these qualities are developed in people. What is required is more precise information on the process of national unity.

Without launching into a philosophical argument, two main dimensions of national unity may be considered. The first involves the political unity of the state in which the constituent parts (whatever they may be) are held together either by consent or by force, enabling it to remain intact in times of external threats to its sovereignty by virtue of its ability to command the support of the majority of people in dealing with external enemies. The second dimension involves the ability of the nation to cope with and absorb the stresses and strains of national crises arising from internal conflicts without a national breakdown of social organization.

Crude as these dimensions are, they may serve as a frame of reference for the present purpose. In the context of the plural society, the second dimension is the immediately relevant one. The point to note is that national unity in this sense does not mean a total absence of conflict, for obviously that is an impossible condition. Social conflict, it has been argued, is the basic form of human interaction in social organization. The question is whether it is functional in the sense of ultimately unifying conflicting groups or interests, or dysfunctional in the sense of being basically disintegrative. Those who believe it to be functional would point to the fact that the vast majority of modern nations achieved their national unity after a long series of conflicts, including civil war. But it could just as easily be argued that conflict is essentially disruptive and malintegrative, for history provides numerous examples of conflicts leading to national disintegration. Whatever the issues at stake and however noble the cause, social and political conflict in a multi-racial society is apt to polarize ethnic groups and to harden the lines of division in the nation. In the majority of multi-racial societies, current conditions leave little doubt that conflict is fundamentally disintegrative even though it may have a cathartic value. Any damage done to race relations may take a generation to heal.

The problem, therefore, is how to minimize conflict, particularly that which stems from race, religion, and language, three of the most emotional issues which are capable of arousing the most primitive passions in plural societies. The ideal would be to make race, religion and language irrelevant to the society as a whole, and many social

scientists believe that modernization will eventually produce that outcome. But this becomes a circular problem: it is precisely during the modernization process that these issues determine its outcome.

One of the prerequisites of modernization is literacy. Given the fact that up to 70 or 80 per cent of the population in a developing country may be unable to read and write, the widening of literacy among the people is the immediate task of the schools. In so far as literacy provides the key to broader communication with the masses, it is a basic instrument for national unity. Through the national networks of radio and television and national newspapers, official policies and development programmes could be explained to the people, and events of national importance could be publicized so that the entire population could be mobilized to take part in the social transformation of the country. In this way the level of political consciousness could be raised significantly so that there would be a more intelligent participation in the political process.

Generally the primary schools bear the heaviest responsibilities for the spread of literacy and civic consciousness, though they are not necessarily the only agencies for it. For those plural societies which have achieved a large measure of linguistic unity and have an on-going national educational system, as in the West Indies, the problem is a fairly straightforward one of expanding existing educational facilities, training teachers and producing textbooks and related materials. Indeed, where there are no major financial constraints, they would be moving beyond the attainment of mere literacy to the quest for qualitative improvements in the system. But for countries where several languages have prevailed and have been used as media for instruction, the problems are much more complex because they are not only educational but also political in nature. In this respect, a brief review of the experience in Malaysia, which is perhaps the most extreme variant of a plural society with a knotty linguistic problem, may be instructive for other countries with similar puzzles.

The existence in Malaysia of four separate school systems using four different languages for instruction is the classic example of its social and cultural pluralism expressing itself in the structure and process of education, which in turn reinforces the pluralistic structure of the society. Until the 1950's, the Malay, Tamil, Chinese and English schools were relatively free to follow different curricula and to use textbooks which were basically foreign-oriented. Recognizing this condition to be one of the major impediments to the creation of a

common nationality, the government declared that the ultimate objective of educational policy must be to bring together the children of all races under a national system in which Malay would be the chief medium of instruction. This provoked an outcry from the Chinese schools and, to a lesser extent, the Tamil schools which felt that such a policy was aimed at suppressing Chinese and Indian culture. The issue had immediate political repercussions, for the three political parties representing the Malays, Chinese and Indians were trying to form a united front to negotiate with Britain for independence. The inter-party bargaining included a compromise over education, whereby the country would adopt an educational policy 'acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole'. Its guiding principle was the intention of making Malay the national language, 'whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the languages and cultures of non-Malay peoples living in the country'. In effect this was to maintain the status quo. Four years later a committee appointed to review educational policy declared that it would be 'incompatible with an educational policy designed to create national consciousness and having the intention of making the Malay language the national language of the country to extend and perpetuate a language and racial differential throughout the publicly-financed educational system'.

The first step in the nationalizing of the educational system was in fact taken in the late 1950's when a common syllabus was adopted for all schools regardless of the media of instruction. This was to ensure that the content of education would develop a common outlook, a common loyalty to the country, and would provide the basis for a common examination system. While all primary schools in the national system received financial support from public funds, in the secondary schools only those using Malay and English continued to enjoy public financial support. As a result, many Chinese secondary schools found themselves in financial difficulties, and not a few had to close down. This led to a dramatic increase in enrolments in the English-medium secondary schools.

Since 1967, when Malay became the sole official language of the country, the pressure has increased for a more rapid conversion of the English-medium schools to the use of Malay. In 1970 all the English schools began using Malay as the main medium of instruction for the first grade of primary education, with a progressive extension by following the cohorts of pupils taught in Malay. Meanwhile pressure is also increasing for a wider use of Malay in higher education.

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The underlying rationale of Malaysia's educational policy is that education with a common content syllabus, reinforced by a common language, would promote the growth of a nationally homogeneous outlook and the development of a core of shared values leading eventually to the evolution of a common culture, which would then provide the basis for social cohesion and national unity.

There is no doubt that the possession of a common language between culturally distinct groups is a prerequisite for social integration at the national level. The persistence of such discrete cultural groups as the Malays, Chinese and Indians in Malaysia is due largely to the absence of a real lingua franca at the grassroots level; but Malays, Chinese, Indians and others educated in English, significantly, have something approaching a common outlook. However, the English-educated group forms no more than 25 per cent of the total population. In the monolingual West Indian societies, principally Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana, the relatively high degree of social integration between East Indians, Negroes, Europeans, Chinese and others bears witness to the importance of a common language in bringing diverse cultural elements together.

But while a common language is necessary for social integration at the national level, it is by no means clear that it is a sufficient condition for national unity. Recent history and current events in Asia and Europe have shown that a common language is no guarantee against national partition. Conversely, the classic case of Switzerland is often cited as an example of unity in the midst of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to deny that, in a multi-racial society, linguistic pluralism is one of the most intractable barriers to national unity because of its built-in propensity for perpetuating communalism or tribalism, which inhibits the growth of a national culture and a national identity. Where tribalism has prevailed for a long time, there is clearly an urgent need for a common language for everyday communication through the mass media, as well as in the marketplace, between peoples of different linguistic traditions. A common language which facilitates national communication through the mass media could serve as a powerful bond between ethnic groups. It is mainly on this ground that the new, culturally heterogeneous nations have zealously promoted the use of their national language in education.

But the fundamental question remains unanswered: *how* does a

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country, with diverse linguistic and cultural traditions, promote national unity through education, using the national language as the medium of instruction? If we look for empirical models from the developed countries, we are apt to be misled by over-simplifications of their long, sometimes bitter, historical experience. Among the developing countries, Indonesia is perhaps the only plural society which has achieved a remarkable measure of success in welding together more than 100 million people scattered over 3,000 islands. But Indonesia's experience is a unique combination of historical forces, the use of the national language—*Bahasa Indonesia*—in education and mass communication, and the charisma of Sukarno, a combination which defies replication in other plural societies.

Nevertheless, the empirical experience of countries like the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand on the one hand, and Thailand and Indonesia on the other, suggests that if there exists something approaching a national way of life which puts a premium on achievement, commands the respect of all ethnic groups and, on the whole, rewards its citizens on the basis of merit, then education has a reasonably good chance of promoting national unity through a common language. That is to say, the instrumental value of a common language in achieving national unity must be reinforced by the appropriate social and political norms and practices which reflect the nation's ideals of national unity.

The existence of a strong national culture, with achievement norms, provides a powerful emotional and psychological basis for integrating diverse ethnic groups, and for reinforcing the intellectual and aesthetic appeal of the national language. But societies with linguistic pluralism are precisely those which lack a strong national culture as a rallying point for their ethnic groups. It is a problem of the hen and the egg.

While we do not know enough about the psychological factors which bind people together as a national entity, there is some evidence to suggest that when people speak and think in the same language, they share certain basic elements of a common culture. Through a common language there grows an affinity of mind and spirit. This is perhaps the strongest rationale for the use of a common language as the educational instrument for fostering national unity. But in a multilingual society, it is seldom a simple, straightforward case of everybody accepting one language for education. To present a rational, logical case for monolingualism is relatively easy, but to get it accepted by all groups with vested interests in their own language is

enormously difficult. The stronger the ethnic group, and the more distinctive its language and culture, the greater will be its resistance to the use of a different language for education, if the rewards do not clearly outweigh whatever losses will be entailed in a change of language.

Another stumbling block to national unity is educational segregation by race. Where ethnic groups are separated by occupation and traditional land settlements, children in any school tend to be predominantly of one group or another. In some cases, geographical separation of ethnic groups is aggravated by the linguistic segmentation of schools. Where this condition prevails, all efforts in educational planning for national unity may be vitiated if the problem of segregation is not resolved at the same time. The assumption is that, if children grow up together and share the same educational experience under one roof, it will help to promote the growth of a common outlook and a core of shared values. Research has shown that the educational segregation of ethnic groups reinforces prejudice, fear and hostility. In the United States of America, for example, much of the tension between blacks and whites has its roots in educational segregation. A summary of the *Report of the Advisory Committee on Racial Imbalance and Education*, Massachusetts State Board of Education, 1965,[1] declares that racial imbalance or segregation in the schools is

> '... detrimental to education because it impairs the confidence, distorts the self-image, and lowers the motivation of the Negro child; it encourages prejudice in children of both races; it inadequately prepares children for life in a multi-racial community, nation, and world; it too often produces inferior educational facilities in predominantly Negro schools; and it impairs opportunities and thus squanders human resources...'

Educational segregation in the United States was an institutional reinforcement of racial prejudice and discrimination against Negroes in the southern states, but even in the more enlightened cities in other parts of the country, discrimination and segregation remained for a long time a *de facto* practice in education. The civil disturbances of the 1960's finally focused attention on the negative consequences of racial segregation in education, but current attempts at redressing the racial imbalance in the schools have not met with any great success.

1. Center for Field Studies, Harvard Graduate School of Education, *Schools for Hartford*, n.d., p. 10.

In the developing plural societies, there are subtle forms of prejudice and discrimination, although they do not usually take the extreme form which used to be practised in the United States or that which is enforced in South Africa. Nevertheless, they may find expression in subtle or blatant practices of educational segregation. Whatever the rationale for the segregation of children in schools—and the reference here is to racial segregation—the effects are nearly always malfunctional and counterproductive to the aims of social integration. There is no easy solution where the different ethnic groups happen to be separated between urban and rural areas, but certainly within the urban centres there should be no excuse for it. If education is really intended to promote national unity, one of the first things it must do is integrate racial groups in schools. Where there has been a long history of racial segregation in schools, the educational planner will have to evaluate this problem carefully, and its resolution will require a major change in educational policy and practice.

5. Some approaches to planning education for a plural society

From the preceding sections, two general observations may serve as a summary of the problems discussed.

a. The underlying conditions of social and cultural pluralism have on the one hand profoundly influenced social organization, economic development and the political process, and on the other unmistakably shaped the structure of education in plural societies. The multidirectional interaction of social, economic, political and educational factors in varying degrees and in different ways has in turn modified the pluralistic structure of the society. Although in many cases the cultural identity and political loyalty of ethnic groups have changed, or are changing, the racial factor continues to influence major economic and political decisions affecting the society as a whole.

b. The relative absence of social and cultural integration of the major ethnic groups in the society has prompted national leaders to look to education as the key to national unity. But it is not clear what constitutes national unity, nor is it clearly understood how it might be achieved. Indeed, in some situations certain policies and programmes in education designed to correct economic and social imbalances between groups may in fact exacerbate race relations and undermine national unity. For these reasons, planning education for a plural society involves many more difficulties and responsibilities than planning for a culturally homogeneous society.

The following pages will outline some suggestions on how the educational planner might appraise various background and foreground factors which are considered specially relevant to education in a plural society.

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1. *Historical background*

The implicit purpose of educational planning is to change present conditions in anticipation of future needs. Essentially, educational planners are dealing directly or indirectly with the dynamics of social, economic and political change, a reordering of the lives of millions of people. Because present conditions are rooted in the past, an understanding of the country's social and political history should provide certain insights into current problems. A balanced perspective of the social and political structure, the organization of the economy and its relation to the population, the nature and functions of institutions, patterns of public administration, and the role of education in the modernization process, would alert the planner to problems which arise from time to time in the course of the planning exercise and the implementation of programmes. Since education is a highly politicized matter, the planner may find himself caught in the cross currents of local or national politics. For this reason it would be very useful to know what the really significant pressure groups are, either within or outside the government.

2. *The demographic structure*

The planner would analyse this as a matter of course when dealing with population projections, but special note should be taken of the geographical distribution of ethnic groups. The distribution of ethnic groups in urban, semi-urban and rural areas and their relative density in each area would indicate the catchment for the organization of schools, whether they are racially integrated or not. Differential rates of fertility, mortality, life expectancy and net growth which are cross-tabulated with urban, semi-urban and rural areas would be highly relevant to forecasting the needs of schools and ancillary services. Imbalances in the distribution of educational facilities and, by implication in educational opportunities, may have bizarre political repercussions at election time, and the educational planner may be under pressure to devise programmes which might not make educational sense but which certainly could have a significant political pay-off for the government. At any rate, possession of these demographic facts would place the planner in a better position to rationalize political decisions and to offer viable alternatives which might help to resolve both the political and the educational problem.

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Additionally, information on current and prospective trends in the geographical mobility of the rural population would be important to decisions on where to locate new schools. Although there is a tendency for young people from the rural areas to drift to the towns in search of employment, rural development schemes may also shift large numbers of people from one rural area to another. At any rate, under changing economic conditions people are bound to move from one area or region to another, and the planner should carefully examine the trends in internal migration to ensure that new schools are located in the right catchment-areas. Where possible, the data should be broken down to show the ethnic composition of the rural and the urban population, which may have implications for economic and educational policies. For example, if one ethnic group is found to predominate in the urban areas, it may explain some of the economic imbalances in the society. The figures in Table 4, showing the percentage of urban population by race in Malaya, illustrate some of the special educational problems which the planner may be called upon to resolve.

TABLE 4. Malaya: percentage of urban population by race

Year	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others	Total
1947	21.1	62.3	13.8	2.8	100.0
1957	20.0	67.7	8.7	3.6	100.0

SOURCE Federation of Malaya, *1957 Census Report.*

The outstanding fact to note is that over 60 per cent of the population in urban areas was Chinese in the two censal years, with an increase of more than 5 per cent between 1947 and 1957. In the case of Malays, the situation did not change significantly, except to register a slight drop, while the Indians showed a marked drop. The real significance is the disparity between Chinese and Malays in the urban population, especially when the former made up about 37 per cent and the latter about 50 per cent of the total population in 1957.

Given these facts, it is not difficult to see why there have been glaring social and economic imbalances in the society. In these circumstances educational segregation would seem to be unavoidable. It is against such a demographic background that educational planning has to meet an extraordinary challenge.

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3. *The labour force*

The usual categories of occupational groups by educational qualification should be cross-tabulated with ethnic groups. The ethnic factor should run through the analysis of growth rates of the labour force, employment, unemployment and under-employment. The distribution of ethnic groups in the urban-rural continuum is likely to show a parallel in the clustering of ethnic groups around specific occupations. In Guyana, for example, where Negroes form the majority of urban dwellers, they tend to predominate in the civil service, the teaching profession, and general white-collar as well as blue-collar jobs, while trade and commerce is dominated by East Indians who also make up the bulk of rice farmers and workers in the sugar industry. In Malaysia the majority of shop-keepers and businessmen, craftsmen and technicians as well as people in the professions are Chinese, while a large proportion of the small Malay urban population is found in government service. The vast majority of Malays are in agriculture and related activities.

With industrialization, the urban centres (where the majority of industrial plants are located) provide a readily available source of both skilled and semi-skilled labour. Given the ethnic distribution, one can see how the economic imbalances between groups could widen rapidly and aggravate race relations.

If the policy is to reduce these imbalances, and the stress is on technical and vocational education to provide the manpower for industrial development, the educational planner may have a difficult choice in deciding where to site the technical and vocational schools. If in the rural areas so that the disadvantaged people there would have better opportunities for acquiring new skills, what are the problems concerning practical workshop experience which, generally, could best be offered by the factories in the urban areas? If they are sited in the urban centres, what are the problems for rural children? What alternative courses could be taken without incurring excessive costs and inefficiencies?

Projecting the growth of the labour force is a relatively simple exercise, but estimating the number and percentage likely to be employed in each occupational group is vastly more difficult. Nevertheless, no matter how crude the estimates, the absolute numbers and percentages by occupational groups must be available if educational planning is to have any relevance to manpower planning.

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A few questions here will highlight some of the puzzles that the planner may have to solve. Assuming the projected manpower data are available, what are the implications for educational and other training programmes which will affect the ethnic distribution by occupational groups? Is it possible to exercise any control over the ethnic distribution in occupational groups? If not, how could the racial imbalances be corrected? Whatever strategy is followed, what are the likely repercussions or outcomes?

Educational planners accustomed to working in a homogeneous society may be rudely surprised to realise that, in a plural society with racial imbalances in the labour force, particularly in high-level manpower, a straightforward output of trained manpower may aggravate the existing imbalances, with bizarre repercussions on the structure of political and economic power in the country. Where tensions are high, allegations of racial discrimination in the public services and in private enterprise are apt to intensify the strain on race relations. The allegations, of course, are symptomatic of discontent and low morale among workers.

Since manpower planning is to regulate the supply of trained people in response to the demands of the economy, the educational planner cannot ignore the racial factor in the inputs and outputs of the educational system, bearing in mind the enormous problems posed by questions of racial imbalance. Essentially, racial imbalance suggests that there should be a fixed criterion of participation by various ethnic groups in social, economic and political activities, and such a criterion would be proportional to the racial composition of the total population in the country. But any attempt to fix an absolute standard of racial participation would lead to arbitrary procedures which would, in the long run, retard racial goodwill and harmony, and might also slow down economic development.

Where racial imbalances do exist, and there is political pressure to redress them, the only practical interpretation of imbalance is that it means an unduly high or an unduly low numerical participation of any racial group in the economy by comparison with the participation of other racial groups. Of course, under-representation in one area may be compensated for in another. Generally, however, the sensitive areas are not in the unskilled or semi-skilled categories of workers, but in the skilled and highly-skilled groups which tend to be most articulate in their expressions of discontent and which are most likely to be affiliated to political parties.

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It is not suggested here that the educational planner has to cast himself, or will be cast by his employer, in the role of arbiter in the distribution of ethnic groups in the labour force—for clearly that is beyond anyone's control in a free enterprise economy—but rather that he must be alert to the danger signals in the problems of racial imbalance and be prepared to cope with them.

4. *Economic development programmes*

A development programme must be capable of achievement through a reasonable effort and must be internally consistent to avoid a conflict in the attainment of objectives. Development planning in the developing countries has become increasingly sophisticated, but one major weakness continues to frustrate attempts at generating rapid economic growth, and that is the lack of careful co-ordination between overall plan objectives and educational planning. It is not uncommon, for example, to find in a five-year plan elaborate development programmes for the public sector and for semi-government projects; but for the private sector, the plan may be content with a statement of the expected volume of total investment. Concurrently, there may be a fairly detailed outline of manpower requirements by major occupational categories, but like the investments for the private sector, they tend to be a statement of aims rather than a programme of action, which presumably is left to the educational system. Part of the problem arises from the fact that manpower planning is often the responsibility of the ministry of labour or of a special body attached to the ministry of economic development or its equivalent, while educational planning is the responsibility of the ministry of education.

If the educational planner finds himself in such a situation, one of the first things he should do is to review current and past development programmes against the background of the economy as a whole and the existing system of education. Where in fact co-ordination between manpower planning and educational planning has been weak or non-existent, it would be necessary to establish some kind of administrative arrangement to bring together, at least for periodic consultation, the economic, manpower and educational planners so that all might have a better perspective of the logical links and sequences between different areas of planning and plan implementation.

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Economic development programmes generally aim at maximizing the growth potential of the country as a whole. If the government is committed to free enterprise, the bulk of public investments is likely to be concentrated on developing the infrastructure so as to attract private investment in industrial development. However, if a major proportion—50 per cent to 80 per cent—of the population is tied to the traditional agricultural sector, and if this agricultural population is predominantly of one ethnic group, economic imbalances between ethnic groups will be inevitable. This, in fact, is what has happened in most of the plural societies with a free-enterprise economy.

If the general policy is to narrow the economic gap between two ethnic groups, it may conflict with the aim of maximizing economic growth. A policy geared to equalizing economic benefits and the spread of social justice may result in low productivity, at least in the short run. Where discontent is rising, the government may have to mount new programmes to rectify whatever imbalances it believes exist.

One of the sequels to the race riots in Malaysia in 1969 was a review of the economic conditions of various racial groups since it was assumed that racial imbalances, among other factors, were linked to the political crisis that led ultimately to the riots. In January, 1971, the Government of Malaysia announced its new economic policy. Since the policy statement has a direct bearing on the central theme of this booklet, the relevant passages are quoted in full. There are two prongs to the new economic policy:

> 'One is the eradication of poverty irrespective of race. This, it must be emphasised, is a departure from the previous belief that the eradication of rural native poverty alone would conduce towards national unity. The present policy clearly requires that the programme to conquer poverty, to raise income level and employment opportunities, must transcend racial lines and must benefit all the people, irrespective of racial origin... We must work towards the alleviation of the suffering of the poor, be he a Malay, Chinese or Indian...
>
> 'The second prong is the restructuring of society through the modernisation of rural life, a rapid and balanced growth of urban activities and, above all, the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community in all categories and at all levels of operation so that over a period of time—in one generation—they can be a full partner in the economic life of the nation...
>
> 'This second prong has no relation to the question of wealth or poverty. It is by its very nature a racial programme involving a portion of the Malays and other indigenous people, the bulk of whom are rural-oriented,

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with a view to transforming them into a commercial and industrial community. This programme envisages an expanding national economy but with controlled distribution in order to avoid any feeling of deprivation, real or imagined, by any community...

'The restructuring of the economy must be so designed as to gradually reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function... It would not be conducive to national unity merely to have the urban-rural racial split replaced by an employer-employee racial split. Malays and other indigenous people must move into the modern urban sectors of the economy, not merely as workers and employees. They must eventually also have a roughly proportionate stake in ownership and control of urban-type activities, whether located in existing urban areas or in new townships or growth-centres in present small towns.

'If there was a perpetuation of the identification of race with vocation, and if the Malays and other indigenous people felt that they were condemned to be hopeless dregs of society, since no equal opportunity was available to them to integrate into the commercial and industrial sphere in concert with other races, then one day they may decide to replace the business and commercial community to the detriment of the prosperity and security of the nation as a whole. To those natives in their own country who have no hope, survival means merely existence, then to some, death may mean victory. They will have nothing to lose and there would be no peace in this country.'[1]

Clearly, such a policy has far-reaching implications for economic and educational planning. But between statement of intention and programme implementation lies a big gap which must be carefully bridged by detailed development projects and schemes for human resource development. If the economic backwardness of a racial group is ostensibly due to the lack of the relevant skills for employment in the modern urban sector, the solution is seldom a simple case of providing the opportunities for education and training. The educational planner must ascertain what the existing and prospective employment opportunities are, the level of the people's motivation, the orientation of their value systems, and a host of other socio-cultural factors before deciding on any programme of action. If these interlocking questions are not answered first, expensive training institutions may turn out to be monumental white elephants.

1. Speech by the Minister with Special Functions and Minister of Information, Tan Sri Dato' Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie in the Malaysian Parliament, on March 5, 1971. Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Information, 1971.

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For these reasons, using national aggregates of skilled and unskilled manpower as the basis for educational planning is not likely to be very helpful to specific racial groups, if they are clustered in particular geographical areas. It may be necessary to begin with an examination of general economic and educational problems, district by district, or even village by village, to identify the social, cultural, and administrative bottlenecks so that the actual educational programme can be made relevant to the needs of the community as a whole.

Not infrequently there are competing demands from different ethnic groups on the country's scarce financial resources for development projects. Official support need not necessarily be given to the most viable projects or to those which will yield the highest returns. Similarly, ethnic groups with the highest productivity do not always receive social services commensurate with their contribution to the GNP. Multi-racial societies are sometimes torn between the principle of economic productivity and the pragmatism of social justice to racial groups. These are examples of the centrifugal forces which often act as a counter-thrust to the forward movements of development programmes. Where racial groups are at different levels of social and economic development, they may not be able to pull with equal strength or in the same direction in the national effort to raise productivity. This may partly explain why the economic growth of plural societies tends to be slower than that of homogeneous societies. In extreme cases, the centrifugal forces may be so great as to neutralize or to halt economic growth.

How, it may be asked, does all this concern the educational planner? There is no clear-cut answer to this question. The nature of the problems delineated in this section should make it clear that the planner must be sensitive to a wide range of questions which are germane to education and the development of human resources. It serves to emphasise the fact that the educational process does not, and cannot, operate in a world of its own, insulated from the push and the pull of economic, political, social, and racial forces. The making of decisions on an educational plan may be the resolution of these competing forces in a plural society.

5. *The educational system*

It is presumed that the planner will, as a matter of course, obtain a general overview of the prevailing educational policy, the educational

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system as a whole, the articulation of various levels of education, and the system of administration and its relation to the various bodies which exercise control over the schools. As in the review of the labour force, the ethnic factor should run through the analysis of school enrolments by level and sex. This should be further broken down into regions, and into the ethnic differences in enrolment patterns between rural and urban schools. Retention rates for the primary and secondary levels of education are extremely important for projecting enrolments, and the data can be obtained only from time series in past school enrolments. Where the schools are divided into streams according to language of instruction, it will be important to work out the retention rates for each language stream. Fortunate are those planners who find these educational statistics compiled and ready for use. More commonly they are buried in dusty volumes of various education reports from which the planner will have to extract the relevant information. Unless educational planning has been a functional part of the ministry of education for a period of time, there may not be an organized system of collecting, analysing and storage of data. If so, the planner will have to work out the administrative procedures before attempting anything else.

Tracing the ethnic strand through all the educational data will be very difficult if the government has banned the use of racial classifications in the collection of statistics in a monolingual system. The planner will have to decide whether or not it is important to have data on the pattern of ethnic enrolments in the schools. If the question of racial imbalance does not arise, then the planner's work is considerably simplified.

Where racial categories are officially used to compile statistics, the planner will also have to decide in what way the racial factor should influence the actual planning exercise. However, it is suggested that, whether the question of racial imbalance in educational enrolments arises or not, it may be wise to examine the current situation to see if it merits further attention. If, in fact, there is a fair balance, then it is best to make sure that the balance is maintained. If the trends suggest a growing imbalance, the planner should find out the cause and, if possible, rectify the situation before it gets worse. Needless to say, the planner should exercise the utmost caution in handling this matter to ensure he does not unnecessarily inject racial considerations into the planning exercise.

Assuming that the planner is working in a country where race is

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officially recognized as a problem, the basic educational statistics should show a fairly accurate picture of the flow of students through the system from primary school to university. It should then be possible to identify the current and prospective bottlenecks within the system, and therefore to pinpoint some of the possible sources of racial tension. For illustrations, we may refer to Section 3, where it is pointed out that Malay students were under-represented in the faculties of science, agriculture, engineering and medicine in the University of Malaya. The wide disparity in absolute numbers and in percentages between Malay-medium and English-medium science classes in Malaysian secondary schools leaves little doubt that the racial imbalance in the university was due to the low output of Malay students with science and mathematics from the sixth form (grades 12 and 13). The chain of cause and effect could be traced back as far as the 9th grade. This is an example of an enrolment bottleneck which has predictable consequences. It may be assumed that the bottleneck was caused by a shortage of science and mathematics teachers in the Malay-medium schools. Incidentally, this also illustrates how crucial teachers are in shaping the curricular bias of students towards the arts or the sciences.

A further analysis of enrolments and the number of teachers in Malay-medium and English-medium schools reveals some interesting facts which are relevant to the question of racial imbalance in education. In 1968, Malay-medium primary schools had about twice as many pupils as their English-medium counterparts, but in the secondary schools the position was, roughly speaking, reversed. (See Table 5 and Table 6.) Although the figures in the Tables are not in time series, they suggest a high drop-out rate for the Malay-medium schools. The larger number of pupils in English-medium secondary schools is due to a significantly higher retention rate and the fact that a large proportion of pupils is transferred from the Chinese-medium primary schools. The fact that the majority of Malay-medium primary schools are in the rural areas may explain the wide disparity in enrolment between them and the Malay-medium secondary schools, which are generally in urban or semi-urban centres.

One other important point to note is the average enrolment in the two types of schools. In the Malay-medium primary schools, the average enrolment in 1968 was 260 pupils per institution, as against 830 pupils in the English-medium, while the teacher-pupil ratio was 1.29 for Malay-medium and 1.38 for English-medium. In the second-

ary schools, the average enrolment was 458 pupils in Malay-medium, and 754 pupils in English-medium, but there was no significant difference between them in teacher-pupil ratios.

TABLE 5. Malay- and English-medium primary schools, West Malaysia, 1968

	Malay-medium	English-medium
Number of pupils	606,664	307,984
Number of schools	2330	371
Number of teachers	21,171	8116
Average enrolment per school	260	830
Average teacher-pupil ratio	1.29	1.38

SOURCE Ministry of education, educational planning and research division, *op. cit.*

TABLE 6. Malay- and English-medium secondary schools, West Malaysia, 1968

	Malay-medium	English-medium
Number of pupils	135,496	309,664
Number of schools	296	411
Number of teachers	4807	11,528
Average enrolment per school	458	754
Average teacher-pupil ratio	1.28	1.27

SOURCE c.f. TABLE 5.

From the viewpoint of educational administration, central educational facilities and the deployment of teachers within a school, the data suggest that a sizeable number of Malay-medium primary schools did not enjoy the kind of economies of scale which the English-medium counterparts apparently did, notwithstanding the fact that the former had the advantage of a more favourable teacher-pupil ratio. Similar economies of scale would seem to apply to the English-medium secondary schools.

The Malaysian example illustrates the kind of institutional biases that could arise from the rural-urban ethnic split in the population which is compounded by ethnic segregation through the medium of instruction. The deleterious effects of racial segregation in schools on race relations are well-documented by sociological research, but when one ethnic group is confined largely to the rural areas, the social,

economic and political implications of educational imbalance become extremely serious. Children in rural schools anywhere in the world are likely to be at a disadvantage compared with those in urban schools. The consequent social and economic handicaps of rural people in a homogeneous society are troublesome enough, but in a plural society, with one ethnic group predominantly rural and another mainly urban, such handicaps are socially and politically de-stabilizing factors.

Another example of institutional bias is a standardized national system of examinations to select pupils for lower and upper secondary education. Since the urban schools are generally better equipped and better staffed than the rural schools, urban children have a clear advantage over rural children, all things being equal. Quite apart from the fact that certain ethnic groups, such as the Jews in the United States and the Chinese in south-east Asia, may have a cultural bias favouring high educational achievement, their urban environment places them way ahead of other ethnic groups who may not be so favoured culturally and environmentally. Incidentally, in a multi-lingual society the cultural bias may be reinforced by the medium of instruction in schools. Where the language used has a large store of literature in the arts and sciences, and textbooks and journals are readily available at low cost, the advantages for the ethnic group educated in that particular language are incalculable. The economic strength of the Chinese in Malaysia can certainly be partly explained by the fact that a large proportion of them have been educated in English, which provided them with the key to higher education not only in the country but also in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and other countries where it is used as the medium of teaching in universities.

Since the key to the success of any educational programme lies in the quality of teachers and their distribution by discipline through the system, the current teaching force must be analysed as carefully as school enrolments, together with the system of recruitment and training. This should include information on ethnic background, age, sex, marital status (especially for women), educational and professional qualification, and what subjects they are currently teaching and at what level. Such data are indispensable to a projection of future requirements and, therefore, the planning of teacher-training programmes. For example, teachers could be subsumed under three main categories: arts, science, and technical/vocational. Each category should be further broken down to specific subjects such as history,

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geography, chemistry, mathematics, industrial arts, and so on. When these are cross-tabulated with educational and professional qualification, the educational planner should have a pretty accurate picture of the strength and quality of the teaching force.

Teachers are both consumers and producers in the educational system, but their role as producers should be the primary consideration where rewards for responsibilities are concerned. They are the 'producer goods' in the system since they determine the quantity and the quality of skilled human resources, without which capital investment in any sector of the economy is likely to be wasted. For this reason, the question of racial imbalance in the teaching profession should be handled with great care so as not to undermine the efficiency and professional integrity of teachers. A quota system of employment for teachers, even if it were possible to enforce it, would be counter-productive to correcting the more fundamental racial imbalances in school enrolments on the one hand, and in the overall economy on the other. If it is possible to specify any minimum pre-condition for raising the level of economic and social development of any backward ethnic group, then it may be said that achievement norms must determine the recruitment, training and rewarding of teachers. Furthermore, if morale is an important factor in economic productivity, it is crucial among teachers in determining the qualitative output of human resources. A demoralised teaching profession is comparable to a dispirited army in battle.

One final point: the ethnic distribution of teachers in the schools may have an important bearing on racial segregation. Where racial tensions exist in certain areas, teachers of one ethnic group may feel insecure, if not actually threatened, in an area populated predominantly by another ethnic group. Where racial violence is barely contained, or has actually broken out, the teachers may withdraw *en bloc* if they fear for their personal safety. Even after the violence has subsided, antagonisms are likely to remain so strong that the teachers may refuse to teach in the area, or the community may refuse to have them.

To sum up: in appraising the educational system as a whole, the educational planner should ascertain whether it is functional or dysfunctional not merely in terms of manpower output, but also from the viewpoint of the social and economic integration of ethnic groups. He should ask whether the educational process contributes to a lowering of group tensions by promoting the social and economic welfare of all, or whether it actually aggravates racial prejudice and

ethnic antipathies by its being biased institutionally in favour of one group. The planner should bear in mind that education is an extremely complex part of the interlocking economic and social mechanism, and that the educational system in a plural society is the outcome of the interaction of historical forces and contemporary events. The whole structure of politics—especially racial politics—is there to take decisions in educational matters, decisions which are sometimes only minimally concerned with optimizing the use of material and human resources.

6. *Student career aspirations, job expectations and ethnocentrism*

The chief reason why student aspirations and expectations are here considered together with ethnocentrism is that, in a multi-racial society where competitiveness rather than co-operation regulates social relations, they tend to be linked together, especially in a situation where it is generally considered that one group's gain is another's loss.

Conceptually, aspirations should be distinguished from expectations, for the two do not necessarily coincide. A person with high career aspirations may in fact have lower job expectations if he is realistic about his employment opportunities. Ethnocentrism, which includes prejudice against out-groups, is a separate problem by itself, but in a tense, employment-scarce situation, it is reinforced by a person's perception of threat or aggression from another person of a different ethnic group.

Information on all these problems is indispensable to the formulation of policies and programmes in curriculum evaluation and teaching methods. It is also relevant to general school administration and student guidance and counselling. High aspirations and unrealistic expectations, for example, are the two main contributory factors in the rising tide of frustrations among young school-leavers, and the frustrations could react on dormant or overt ethnic prejudices when they perceive, realistically or mistakenly, that employment discrimination is practised in favour of one group or another.

A recent study showed that different ethnic groups did have different aspirations and expectations, and the significant difference was found in job expectations. One group A was found generally to have high aspirations and high expectations because its members perceived that current conditions were in their favour. Another group B, which had

similarly high aspirations, however, had markedly lower expectations because its members had a more realistic assessment of existing employment opportunities. The differences in expectations reflected each group's perception of the world of work outside the school. The B group tended to be more cynical about their chances of realising their aspirations (such as going to the university and entering the professions), and whether their perceptions were right or wrong, they were less likely to be disappointed later, though this would not preclude their being bitter and disenchanted with the situation. The A group, however, tended to be less realistic in this respect and therefore more likely to be disappointed later. Significantly the B group as a whole felt that certain kinds of employment opportunities were biased in favour of the A group.

An amorphous feeling of being discriminated against in employment opportunities tends to permeate the whole society where tensions run high. There is a strong tendency to cite specific instances where one person of one ethnic group rather than another is apparently given preference to reinforce the generalization about discrimination. Whether there is or is not any actual racial discrimination is not so important as the consequences of *thinking* or *believing* that it exists. Thus a general feeling of frustration is linked with perceptions of racial discriminations. It is the sense of unequal competition, in one way or another, that generates hostile feelings and sours group relations. The result, more often than not, is apt to reinforce racial prejudices based on stereotyping the out-group, which is invested with all kinds of negative qualities ('They are lazy, treacherous, greedy, unscrupulous, disloyal', etc.), which apparently justify social or employment discrimination against them.

It should be stressed, however, that a person with racial prejudices need not necessarily practise racial discrimination. Conversely, a person who practises racial discrimination is not *ipso facto* racially prejudiced. At any rate, what is important is that, in a plural society plagued by social tensions arising from frustrations and anxieties of all kinds, prejudice and discrimination in social relations tend to go hand in hand and are usually the driving force in racial clashes.

There is a wealth of literature on the causes of ethnocentrism, prejudice, discrimination and intolerance, but there is a paucity of information on what could be done through education to counteract the negative forces which exacerbate race relations. Statutory bodies, such as the Race Relations Board in Britain, may have powers to

investigate specific charges of racial discrimination in housing and employment but they do not and cannot root out racial prejudices in the minds of people. To be sure, economic competition underpins most conflicts between ethnic groups in any society, but the conflicts are often overlaid and reinforced by visible racial differences. Thus the confounding of *class* with *racial* conflict rigidifies social relations.

What can education reasonably be expected to do? Given the fact that ethnocentrism (a person's commitment to the value of his own group and the proneness to be prejudiced against members of the out-group) is developed early in life through the influence of the home and the in-group, the schools could include curricula designed to widen the knowledge and understanding of other cultural groups which make up the plural society. This should include a rational analysis of the nature of prejudice and discrimination so that children might see their own, their friends' and their relatives' prejudices for what they are. This should be reinforced by the educational integration of all ethnic groups in the community wherever possible. The entire atmosphere of the school should disallow any covert or over act of prejudice and discrimination. All this, of course, would not guarantee the complete removal of racial prejudice, which may remain strong in the home and the society, but it could certainly promote the development of more tolerant individuals and, hopefully, through them of a more tolerant society.

7. *Multi-lingualism*

If the national language is the life and soul of a nation, it is also often the flashpoint of conflict in multi-lingual societies. It is primarily in India and in south-east Asia that the question of language forms the crux of the problem of educational advance and the development of human resources, particularly in higher education. But the issues of the national language and education, of ethnic minorities and national unity, are so complex that they cannot be dealt with adequately in this brief section, which must be content with the barest outline of some of the salient questions the educational planner may be confronted with.

In the conflict between the desire to establish firmly a national language as the basis of the country's sovereign identity, and the urge to modernise the economy through science education and the appli-

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cation of technology, the outcome for many countries is still uncertain, if not confused. The conflict stems from the fact that the developing nations are trying to graft onto their traditional cultures the science and technology which have been developed by the advanced nations where modern industrialisation has been an intimate part of the general culture for the better part of a hundred years.

One source of the conflict arises from the difficulty in developing a sufficient range of vocabulary in the national language to convey the exact meanings of scientific and technical terms in a European language. Even where the appropriate terms have been coined, often using European root-words, the concepts which the words represent are not easily understood by students. Teachers themselves, if they have been educated in the European language, are often as confused as the students. The reason is that the scientific and technical terms in the national language are often coined by linguistic experts who are not necessarily trained in science and technology. This unavoidably will slow down the production of textbooks and journals, without which teaching and learning will be seriously hampered. This is the most serious hindrance to the teaching of science and technology in the national language.

However, it must be stressed that any language can be made to serve any purpose, provided the country where the language is used has the relevant economic and social underpinning to reinforce the contextual meanings of the new scientific and technical terminologies. It is difficult, for example, for a predominantly agrarian society to produce new words and phrases to express concepts in computer science and space technology which are completely alien to it. On the other hand, it is a mistake to assume that, since modern science and technology were first developed by western nations, only a European language can convey scientific and technical concepts. Japan's emergence as the third largest industrial power in the world demonstrates that a non-European language is quite capable of doing what English or German or Russian has done in spreading science education.

At any rate, the experience of the industrialised nation seems to suggest that the faster the rate of industrialisation, the quicker will the national language evolve its own technical and scientific vocabulary. But the rate of industrialisation depends upon the society's capacity to utilise modern science and technology, which in turn hangs upon the output of scientists and technologists, and this is determined by the quality of education in science and technology.

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This circular problem epitomises another aspect of the tensions in a multi-lingual society trying to modernise its economy with the aid of a national language which has no previous experience of science and technology. The problem is no less acute even in a monolingual society, but at least it has one problem less to cope with. With varying degrees of success, some countries have come to terms with this conflict by the pragmatic choice of a European language for the purpose of teaching science and mathematics in secondary and higher education. But in many countries the politics of language is a potential, if not an actual, Achilles heel in their effort to achieve rapid economic development, which will be determined ultimately by the scientific and technological skills of the people.

Language policy and education in plural, multi-lingual societies constitute a vastly difficult problem for educational planning, and the following are only tentative suggestions of a variety of characteristic frameworks in which planning may have to be carried out. It must be stressed that the categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

A multi-lingual society may have an educational system where:

(a) Only one language is used at all levels and it is generally the adopted mother-tongue of the majority of ethnic groups in the sense that it is used in the home and in general social communication since the original mother-tongues have been abandoned.

(b) Only one language is used at all levels but it is not the mother-tongue of the majority of children who are of different ethnic groups whose home language is a tribal or communal dialect.

(c) The language at all levels is the mother-tongue of the dominant group only, while minorities use their own languages or dialects at home or for social communication within the same linguistic group.

(d) The situation is as in (c) above, but an international language (for example, French or English) is used exclusively in higher education for teaching, reading, research and international communication between scholars.

(e) The situation as in (c) above, but an international language is used mainly though not exclusively in higher education, etc.

(f) Two or more vernacular languages are used in certain regions where they predominate for primary, or primary and secondary, education, but in higher education only the national language is used in teaching, with an international language for reading,

research, etc., and for some specialized courses given by visiting professors from overseas

(g) Two or more major languages, the mother-tongues of different ethnic groups, are used in primary, or primary and secondary, education, while higher education is conducted in an international language.

(h) The situation as in (g) above, but in higher education the international language plays a dominant role while one of the mother-tongues plays a minor role.

(i) The situation is a combination of any two or more of the above categories.

It is possible that there are many more permutations of the linguistic situation vis-à-vis education, but for the present purpose the above typology serves to illustrate the varying complexities of the language problem in multi-lingual societies.

In category (a), represented, for example, by the West Indies, the problems in education are straightforward, except that the planner should be aware of what linguistic experts describe as cultural interference, arising from the fact that the home language may be a distinctive sub-cultural variant of the standard language used in schools. In varying degrees this condition is prevalent in the entire Caribbean region, as well as in parts of the United States, where children whose home and street-corner language is distinct from the school language may suffer from quite severe linguistic handicaps, which lower their educational achievements vis-à-vis those whose home language is a closer approximation to the standard school language.[1]

In category (b), represented by many African and some Asian countries, the comments on (a) would also apply, except that the children will face more severe conflicts and handicaps since the language of formal education (for example, French or English or Belgian) is structurally and culturally so different from their home dialects or languages. However, since the vast majority of children are likely to be in the same position, the institutional bias in favour

1. For a fascinating case study of this problem, see: Stephen S. Baratz and Joan C. Baratz, 'Early Childhood Intervention: The Social Science Base of Institutional Racism', Cambridge, Mass., *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1, February 1970, pp. 29-50.

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of one group will be minimal. The major problem is a pedagogical one of teaching efficiently and effectively the language used for instruction.

In Ceylon, both Sinhalese and Tamil are used at all levels of education, but Tamils seeking employment in government service must be proficient in Sinhalese, while Sinhalese (the people) are not required to know Tamil. India, on the other hand, offers an interesting case of a three-language solution. The Hindi-speaking people of northern India have to learn not only English (which they need), but also another Indian language (such as Tamil, which they may not need), in order to handicap them to the same extent as the non-Hindi speakers who have to learn the official languages (Hindi and English) as well as their own regional language.

For the rest, the cardinal problem for the educational planner is to ensure the minimum of waste of human resources arising from switching the medium of instruction between primary and secondary, and between secondary and higher education. The change from one language medium to another between levels of education often entails a great deal of remedial teaching, and it invariably blocks the free flow of students through the educational system. Children who lack linguistic skills, but who are otherwise intelligent and capable scholastically, may thus be disqualified and debarred from further education.

The problems of switching language media are particularly acute in the transition from secondary to higher education. In Cambodia and Laos, for example, primary and, to some extent, secondary education is in the national language (Khmer and Lao respectively), but higher education is available only in the international language, mainly French. In Malaysia, for many years, students from Malay and Chinese secondary schools were effectively debarred from entering the University of Malaya where the medium of teaching was almost exclusively English. In this case, since the majority of students from the English-medium secondary schools were Chinese, they therefore formed the majority of students in the university, and eventually constituted the bulk of high-level manpower in the country. This is another instance of institutional bias against the Malays, whose frustrations and resentments mounted as the social and economic gap between them and the non-Malays widened. The English language came to be regarded not only as the language of colonial domination but also, after independence, as an obstacle to the educational, social and economic advance of the majority of Malays.

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Where multi-lingualism prevails, serious problems arise in the standardisation of curricula and examinations to ensure comparability in evaluation; in the selection and training of teachers and in the production of textbooks and other educational materials. It also inhibits the development of the national language as a vehicle for science and technology, and as the main medium of higher education.

Needless, to say, an educational Tower of Babel, like its biblical counterpart, may eventually spell the disintegration of a plural society which lacks the bonds of a common language for social and cultural integration. But confusion or ambivalence in the language policy could have destabilizing repercussions throughout the educational system, with possible adverse effects on the quality of skilled manpower and on general economic development.

8. *Financing education*

Education in developing countries is mainly a public enterprise and therefore the bulk of educational finance comes from public sources. Depending on the political structure of the country and the history of educational development, there is usually a centralized or a federal structure dealing with educational finance; and this would by and large reflect the pattern of control over the schools. Where Christian missions have established schools, and where the government is sympathetic to their work, there may be a system of dual control between the government and private bodies, including the various missionary groups, trade guilds and community associations. The private schools may be divided between those which receive subsidies from public funds and those which do not, and government control will vary accordingly. As pointed out in the discussion of the educational system, the lack of administrative control over the private schools can pose a serious problem for the educational planner if they are not obliged by law to submit educational statistics to the ministry of education.

Where the educational system is segmented along cultural and linguistic lines, and ethnic groups in the school population are further segregated by geographical factors, the distribution of public funds merits careful analysis to see if there is any institutional bias against or in favour of one group or another. Apart from considering the capital and recurrent expenditure from public sources, the planner may have to devise methods for collecting additional data on private

sources and expenditure on education. Even where children of all ethnic groups attend the same schools which are subsidized partly or fully by the government, it cannot be assumed that all the children are working under the same advantages or disadvantages. Socio-economic differences would presuppose differentials in the pattern of private supplementary expenditure on education, mainly on books and other educational materials which may make a significant difference in a child's educational performance. To be sure, this is first and foremost a class and not a racial problem, but cultural differences in attitudes towards education may find a subtle reflection in private supplementary expenditure on private tuition and extra-school coaching for examinations. At any rate, any additional information along these lines would be useful for computing the private costs of education no less than for explaining, however tentatively, differences in educational attainment between groups whether by class or cultural criteria.

The usual problems about costing educational projects, estimating recurrent expenditure, and so on, are presumed to be part of the concern of the educational planner. It remains to mention one final point, concerning the situation where more than one language is used for instruction. Multi-lingualism has to pay a high price for the duplication of services, the production of textbooks and educational materials, facilities for teacher education and, possibly, educational administration, especially where school inspectors are concerned. Where financial resources are very limited, the extra cost of duplicated educational services may have to be maintained at the expense of qualitative improvements, and the educational planner will have to work out schemes to establish wider economies of scale in order to minimize waste and to maximize the effectiveness of scarce financial materials and human resources.

6. Conclusion

Educational planning for a plural society presents many extraordinary challenges which may appear overwhelming to the planner who has never lived and worked in a multi-racial country; and to one who has, the difficulties, as they have been depicted in this booklet, may seem exaggerated. To be sure, it is not suggested that the educational planner should look for a racial bogey behind every social, economic, political or educational puzzle, but he is likely to be the proverbial bull in a china shop if he is not psychologically prepared to detect and recognise those danger signals that will cross his path from time to time in the course of his duties.

Where he is a citizen of the country, the planner may have to work under unusual pressures arising from the tensions and conflicts of abrasive race relations. Quite apart from the need to view these problems in perspective and to cope with them in the planning process, he should guard against the danger of getting emotionally involved with the conflicts in the society *in his role as educational planner*. Particularly he should be aware of his own biases and prejudices which may unconsciously intrude upon his professional work, especially in planning decisions which may have long-term consequences. But being emotionally involved as *a private individual* may provide him with those insights which are essential if the planner is to understand the complexities of social and political change in a plural society. His effectiveness as a professional man will depend upon his ability to distinguish between his different roles as educational planner and as private citizen.

For the foreign educational planner who happens to belong to none of the local ethnic groups, the task is, in a sense, less difficult.

However, once he is acquainted with the problems in the country, especially when racial rivalries are intense, he can easily develop a bias, one way or another, and he should be alert to this possibility. His role as a disinterested (but not unconcerned) educational planner must be jealously guarded. If for any reason there is any suspicion of his personal bias, his effectiveness may be impaired because local officials may lose confidence in his impartiality.

The foreigner will require extra tact and diplomacy in building up rapport with local officials and other people with whom he will be working, and whose co-operation may be crucial to his success. The fact that he is in theory not emotionally involved with local rivalries will give him an advantage over his local counterpart, but this advantage should be used with extreme care when proffering advice to the host government on policy matters.

Whether the educational planner is a citizen of the country or a foreigner, his function is basically advisory, and his primary duty is to present as many viable alternatives as possible. His special knowledge and insights may enable him to influence the choice of alternatives, but he must recognise and accept the fact that the decision on any course of action rests ultimately with the government.

Suggestions for further reading

These items cover, in more detail, some of the issues discussed in this booklet.

M. BANTON, *Race relations*. London, Tavistock Publications, 1967.

L.G. COWAN, J. O'CONNEL, D.G. SCANLON (eds.), *Education and nation-building in Africa*. New York, Frederick A. Praegar, 1965.

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— *Netherlands India: a study of plural economy*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944.

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UNESCO and THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES, *Higher education and development in south-east Asia*, Vol. 1 (Director's report by Howard Hayden), Paris, 1967.

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IIEP book list

The following books, published by Unesco/IIEP, are obtainable from the Institute or from Unesco and its national distributors throughout the world:

Educational development in Africa (1969. Three volumes, containing eleven African research monographs)

Educational planning: a bibliography (1964)

Educational planning: a directory of training and research institutions (1968)

Educational planning in the USSR (1968)

Fundamentals of educational planning (full list at front of this volume)

Manpower aspects of educational planning (1968)

Methodologies of educational planning for developing countries by J. D. Chesswas (1968)

Monographies africaines (five titles, in French only: list available on request)

New educational media in action: case studies for planners (1967. Three volumes)

The new media: memo to educational planners by W. Schramm, P. H. Coombs, F. Kahnert, J. Lyle (1967. A report including analytical conclusions based on the above three volumes of case studies)

Problems and strategies of educational planning: lessons from Latin America (1965)

Qualitative aspects of educational planning (1969)

Research for educational planning: notes on emergent needs by William J. Platt (1970)

The following books, produced in but not published by the Institute, are obtainable through normal bookselling channels:

Quantitative methods of educational planning by Héctor Correa
Published by International Textbook Co., Scranton, Pa., 1969

The world educational crisis: a systems analysis by Philip H. Coombs
Published by Oxford University Press, New York, London and Toronto, 1968

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The International Institute for Educational Planning

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